

# Usability and Accessibility for Statewide Websites



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# Road Map

1. It's all about content
2. Key accessibility issues and resources
3. Key usability issues and resources
4. Spotlight on Vermont
5. Spotlight on Maine
6. Getting started and keeping with it



## **Part 1.**

It's all about content

# It's all about content

- Content delivery is a website's raison d'être – we must get it right
- ...but getting it right isn't always easy

# What makes for high quality statewide content?

- ❑ **Informative:** factually accurate, up to date and covers relevant subject matter
- ❑ **Usable:** easily navigated, understood and digested by the user
- ❑ **Accessible:** usable for the largest audience, regardless of disability, location, device or speed

It all adds up

Informative resources +  
Usable content + Better accessibility  
= Happy, informed users



## Part 2.

# Key accessibility issues and resources

# Accessibility

Back to our definitions...

- **Accessibility** = Usable by the largest audience, regardless of disability, location, device or speed.
- 2000 Census counted 99.5 million people in the US with disabilities
- Accessible doesn't have to = text only

# Examples of assistive technology

- Alternative keyboards and mice
- Screen magnifiers
- Braille displays
- Adaptive browsers (touch screen, speech output)
- Screen readers

# Test-driving a screen reader

- IBM Home Page reader – adaptive “talking” browser

<http://www-306.ibm.com/able/dwnlds/index.html>

- JAWS for Windows – screen reader

[http://www.freedomscientific.com/fs\\_downloads/morejaws.asp](http://www.freedomscientific.com/fs_downloads/morejaws.asp)

# Accessibility Standards

- ▣ **Prevailing standards: Section 508**

Enacted as part of 1998 Rehabilitation Act amendment. Required federal departments and agencies to make information tech accessible to people with disabilities.

- ▣ Guide to 508 standards for web sites:

<http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/guide/1194.22.htm>

- ▣ Applies only to fed gov't but some states have passed accessibility legislation. State laws and guidelines at a glance:

<http://www.ittatc.org/laws/stateLawAtGlance.php>

# Accessibility Standards

Prevailing standards con't

- W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) has developed Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG):

<http://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/wcag.php>

- Priority 1 checkpoints (“musts” vs “should” and “may”)

<http://www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT/#wc-priority-1>

# Accessibility Seals

- W3C / WCAG seal – meets priority 1 guidelines

<http://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG1A-Conformance>

- Watchfire / Bobby 508 (not a standard, but a popular test for section 508 compliance):

<http://www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT/#wc-priority-1>

# Starting points for better accessibility

- Determine what needs work:
  - WebAim – free accessibility evaluation tools:  
<http://www.webaim.org/techniques/articles/freetools/>
- Set priorities
  - Fix easiest issues on homepage first (missing, incomplete alt text tags)
  - Colors
  - Frames without titles
  - Then address template, HTML and non-HTML issues
- WebAim's Fast Track to Web Accessibility  
<http://www.webaim.org/techniques/articles/fasttrack#1>



## Part 3.

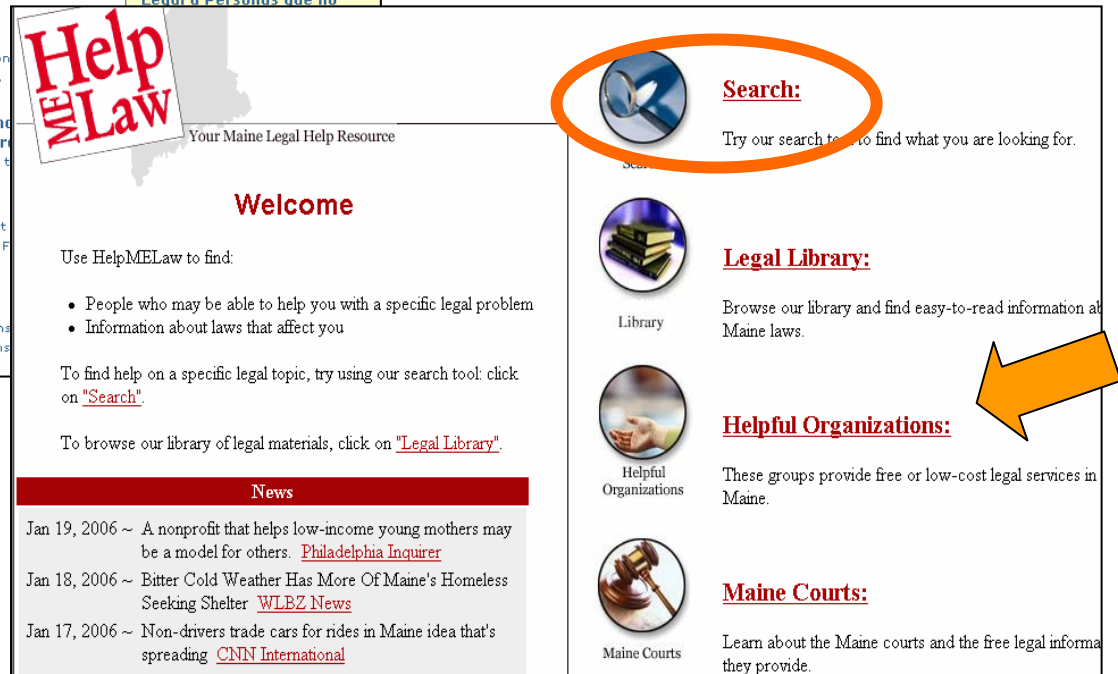
# Key usability issues and resources

# Back to our definitions

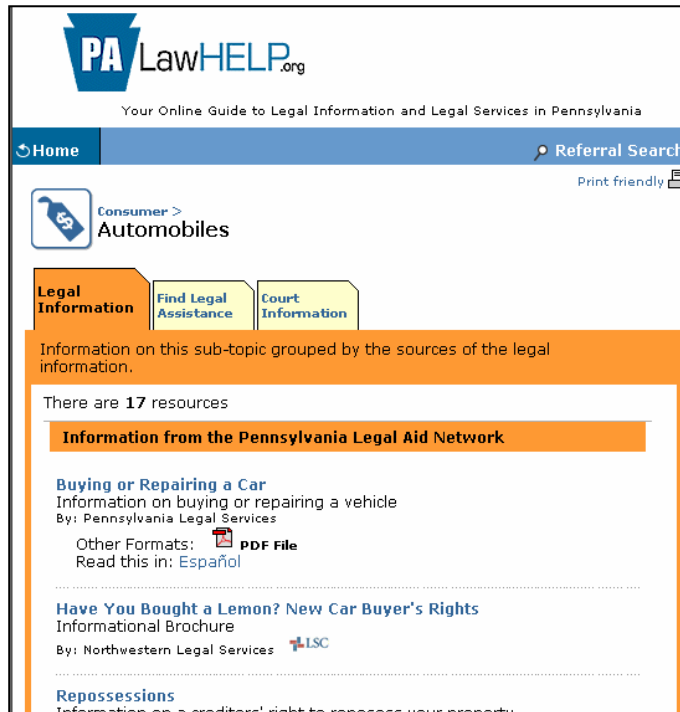
- **Usable:** a website and its content is easily navigated, understood and digested by the user
  - People don't use online content the same way as print
  - Usability applies to site structure and content

# Usability Rec's for site layout

- Make the homepage navigation simple and include short sublevel titles or descriptions. Make key functions prominent.



## □ Use a consistent layout on subpages



**PA LawHELP.org**  
Your Online Guide to Legal Information and Legal Services in Pennsylvania

Home Referral Search Help Legal Aid Providers

Print friendly

Consumer > Automobiles

Legal Information Find Legal Assistance Court Information

Information on this sub-topic grouped by the sources of the legal information.

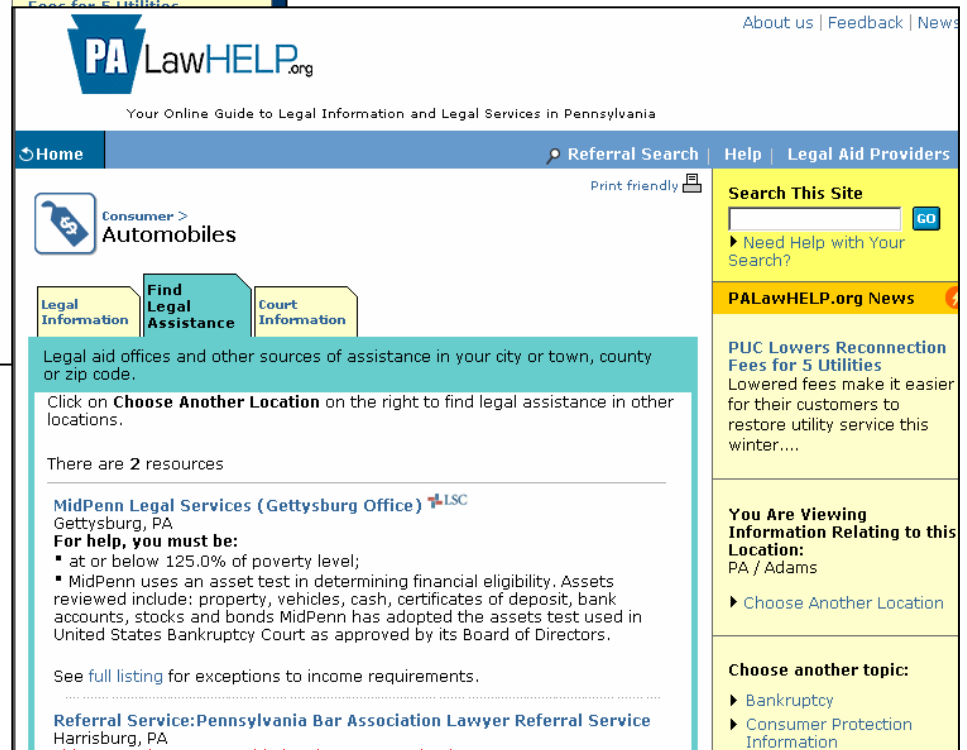
There are 17 resources

**Information from the Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network**

**Buying or Repairing a Car**  
Information on buying or repairing a vehicle  
By: Pennsylvania Legal Services  
Other Formats: PDF File  
Read this in: Español

**Have You Bought a Lemon? New Car Buyer's Rights**  
Informational Brochure  
By: Northwestern Legal Services LSC

**Repossessions**  
Information on a creditors' right to repossess your property



**PA LawHELP.org**  
Your Online Guide to Legal Information and Legal Services in Pennsylvania

Home Referral Search Help Legal Aid Providers

Print friendly

Consumer > Automobiles

Legal Information Find Legal Assistance Court Information

Legal aid offices and other sources of assistance in your city or town, county or zip code.

Click on **Choose Another Location** on the right to find legal assistance in other locations.

There are 2 resources

**MidPenn Legal Services (Gettysburg Office)** LSC  
Gettysburg, PA  
**For help, you must be:**

- at or below 125.0% of poverty level;
- MidPenn uses an asset test in determining financial eligibility. Assets reviewed include: property, vehicles, cash, certificates of deposit, bank accounts, stocks and bonds MidPenn has adopted the assets test used in United States Bankruptcy Court as approved by its Board of Directors.

See [full listing](#) for exceptions to income requirements.

**Referral Service: Pennsylvania Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service**  
Harrisburg, PA

**Search This Site**  
Need Help with Your Search?

**PA LawHELP.org News**

**PUC Lowers Reconnection Fees for 5 Utilities**

**You Are Viewing Information Relating to this Location:**  
PA / Adams  
Choose Another Location

**Choose another topic:**

- Bankruptcy
- Consumer Protection Information

## ❑ Don't strand users – provide context and related links

**INDIANA LEGAL SERVICES • INDIANA JUSTICE CENTER**  
Providing Free Legal Services to the Low-income & Elderly of Indiana

Home | About Us | Legal Information | Find Legal Help | News | Events | Links | Jobs | Volunteer

Search:

### What is Joint Custody?

Joint custody is when the parents share custody and both make the important decisions in the child's life. It does not necessarily mean each parent has the child one half of the time.

*[Note: You can click on the pink question to go directly to the answer to that question, or you can scroll down the page to see all the questions and answers].*

**When will a court order joint custody?**

**How will the court decide if it is in the child's best interests to order joint custody?**

**If the court orders joint custody, does that mean each person has the child one half of the time?**

**The father and I don't get along very well, but we usually agree on things about the children. Can we have joint custody?**

**When will a court order joint custody?**

The court will award joint custody if it is in the child's "best interests." If the parties agree, the court will order joint custody. Even if only one parent wants joint custody, the court may order it if the court thinks it would be in the child's best interests.

**Family Issues Topics**

[All Child Custody Articles](#)

**Related Articles**

- ▶ [General Information About Visitation](#)
- ▶ [General Information About Paternity](#)

**Related Links**

- ▶ [Indiana Department of Education-Schools](#)
- ▶ [Indiana Ambulance](#)
- ▶ [Family Law Advice-Custody](#)

**LEGAL AID-GA.ORG**  
Georgia's web site guide to free legal information and legal services.

Home Page > > [Evictions](#)

### How to Answer An Eviction Warrant

by: Atlanta Legal Aid Society

#### HOW TO ANSWER AN EVICTION WARRANT

Margaret L. Kinnear  
Atlanta Legal Aid Society  
Last Revised: May 25, 2004

Under Georgia Law you can be evicted if:

- You do not pay your rent
- You break your lease
- You do not move out at the end of your lease

However, your landlord must follow the law to evict you.

Your landlord

- cannot change your locks
- cannot put your things in the street
- must take you to court.

When this happens, you will get an **eviction warrant** or a **dispossessory warrant**. You can answer this warrant and tell your side of the story.

Search

▶ Need Help with Your Search?

[Find Legal Help On Evictions](#)

**Related Resources**

[Eviction \(Answers to Common Questions\)](#)  
By: Georgia Legal Services Program

[more...](#)

- Chunk content into smaller pieces with heading and subheadings

Maryland Pharmacy Assistance Programs (MPAP) Summary													
<b>Name</b>	<b>Maryland Pharmacy Assistance Programs (MPAP)</b>												
<b>Non-Financial Eligibility Conditions</b>	<p>A resident of Maryland who is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not in prison or jail</li> <li>• Not receiving Medical Assistance</li> <li>• A citizen of the United States or an alien lawfully admitted to the U.S. in <a href="#">specified categories</a></li> <li>• People eligible for <a href="#">QMB</a> benefits or <a href="#">TEMHA</a> eligible <a href="#">COMAR 10.09.60.03</a></li> </ul>												
<b>Income Eligibility Conditions</b>	<p>Gross <a href="#">countable household income</a> not more than:</p> <table> <tr><td>1</td><td>\$900</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td>\$1,041</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td>\$1,306</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td>\$1,571</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td>\$1,836</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td>\$2,101</td></tr> </table> <p><a href="#">Do these numbers change?</a></p>	1	\$900	2	\$1,041	3	\$1,306	4	\$1,571	5	\$1,836	6	\$2,101
1	\$900												
2	\$1,041												
3	\$1,306												
4	\$1,571												
5	\$1,836												
6	\$2,101												
<b>Asset Eligibility Conditions</b>	<p><a href="#">Countable household assets</a> not more than:</p> <table> <tr><td>1</td><td>\$4,000</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td>\$5,000</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td>\$6,000</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td>\$6,000</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td>\$6,000</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td>\$6,000</td></tr> </table> <p><a href="#">Do these numbers change?</a></p> <p>Assets are counted as of the first day in the month that you apply. Some resources are excluded.</p> <p>*Effective April 1, 2004</p>	1	\$4,000	2	\$5,000	3	\$6,000	4	\$6,000	5	\$6,000	6	\$6,000
1	\$4,000												
2	\$5,000												
3	\$6,000												
4	\$6,000												
5	\$6,000												
6	\$6,000												
<b>Benefit</b>	<p>MPAP has the same drug coverage as the Medicaid program.</p> <p>As of October 1, 2003, the co-payment will be \$2.50 for all generic drugs and some brand name drugs. Certain brand name drugs will have a \$7.50 co-payment.</p>												
<b>Apply At</b>	<p>You can also apply online at the <a href="#">Maryland Pharmacy Program website</a>. Eventually, applications for the Maryland Pharmacy Program, which went into effect July, 1, 2003 are to be available at all DSS offices. Some DSS offices may have only copies of old application forms at this time, but clients may submit the old application to the Maryland Pharmacy Program. The best approach is to download the on-line form.</p> <p>You may also call toll-free 1-800-226-2142, or TDD, 1-800-735-2258 for an</p>												

## More content chunking

Legal Services Law Line of Vermont

Vermont Legal Aid



Search This Site

Vermont's Free Legal Help Website

[Home](#) | [Laws](#) | [Free Legal Help](#) | [Helpful Groups](#) | [Courts](#) | [News](#) | [Print This Page](#)

### Helpful Organizations

[Area Agency on Aging for Northeastern Vermont](#) ([more info](#))  
1161 Portland St.  
St. Johnsbury VT 05819  
(802) 748-5182

[Autism Society of Vermont](#) ([more info](#))  
PO Box 978  
White River Junction VT 05001  
(800) 559-7398

[BROC - Community Action in Southwestern Vermont](#) ([more info](#))  
(800) 717-BROC (2762)

[Barrier-Free Justice-Vermont](#) ([more info](#))  
Toll-free (877) 213-2661

[Burlington Code Enforcement Office](#) ([more info](#))  
(802) 863-9094

[Burlington Housing Authority \(BHA\)](#) ([more info](#))  
(802) 864-0538

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### Vermont Legal Aid: Burlington Office

264 North Winooski Avenue  
Burlington, VT 05401

**Sponsoring Org:** Vermont Legal Aid, Inc.

**Services:** Free, civil legal assistance and referral to other legal and social service help.

**Legal Areas:**

**Eligibility:** Are you low income? Are you a victim of abuse? Do you have a disability? Are you 60 years old or older? Do you have a health insurance question or problem? Do you have concerns about your long-term care? You may be able to get free legal help from Vermont Legal Aid or Legal Services Law Line of Vermont. Call us to find out if you qualify.

**Screening:**

**Counties Served:** Addison Chittenden Franklin

**Contact:**

**URL:** [www.vtlegalaid.org](http://www.vtlegalaid.org)

**Phone:** (802) 863-5620

**Fax:** (802) 863-7152

**Email:**

# Readability and low literacy issues

- Low literacy levels presents additional concerns
    - ▣ May need to read word for word for comprehension
    - ▣ If frustrated, will skip over large sections completely
- See Nielsen's AlertBox FMI:  
<http://www.useit.com/alertbox/20050314.html>
- 1 in four adults in the US is functionally illiterate

# Related concept

## Plain Language / Plain English

### Definition from PlainLanguage.Gov:

- Communication your audience can understand the first time they read or hear it. Language that is plain to one set of readers may not be plain to others. Written material is in plain language if your audience can:
  - Find what they need;
  - Understand what they find; and
  - Use what they find to meet their needs

Guidelines, word suggestions and useful resources at:  
<http://www.plainlanguage.gov/index.cfm>

# Developing Usable, Readable Content: Vermont's Experience

[Legal Services Law Line of Vermont](#) [Vermont Legal Aid](#)



## Vermont Law Help



Search This Site

Vermont's Free Legal Help Website

[Home](#) | [Laws](#) | [Free Legal Help](#) | [Helpful Groups](#) | [Courts](#) | [News](#) | [Print This Page](#)

Free legal information, forms, and links to legal and other help and to Vermont's Courts.

 **Housing**

 **Benefits**

 **Family**

 **Money & Debt**

 **Health**

 **Abuse**

 **Work**

 **Taxes**

 **Small Claims**

 **Education**

 **Youth**

 **Seniors**

 **Disability**



Are you low-income?  
Are you a victim of abuse?  
Do you have a disability?  
Are you 60 years old or older?  
You may be able to get free legal help.  
Call Vermont Legal Aid at (800) 889-2047.

# Developing Usable, Readable Content: Maine's Experience



Your Maine Legal Help Resource

## Welcome

Use HelpMELaw to find:

- People who may be able to help you with a specific legal problem
- Information about laws that affect you

To find help on a specific legal topic, try using our search tool: click on ["Search"](#).

To browse our library of legal materials, click on ["Legal Library"](#).

### News

Jan 19, 2006 ~ A nonprofit that helps low-income young mothers may be a model for others. [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

Jan 18, 2006 ~ Bitter Cold Weather Has More Of Maine's Homeless Seeking Shelter [WLBZ News](#)

Jan 17, 2006 ~ Non-drivers trade cars for rides in Maine idea that's spreading [CNN International](#)

Jan 16, 2006 ~ Family Crisis Services plans volunteer training in



Search

**Search:**

Try our search tool to find what you are looking for



Library

**Legal Library:**

Browse our library and find easy-to-read information about Maine laws.



Helpful Organizations

**Helpful Organizations:**

These groups provide free or low-cost legal services in Maine.



Maine Courts

**Maine Courts:**

Learn about the Maine courts and the free legal information they provide.

# Key elements of usable online content

- ❑ The content is ~ 50% shorter than the corresponding printed material
- ❑ A paragraph contains only one idea
- ❑ Headings convey main ideas
- ❑ Sentences and paragraphs are short
- ❑ Written in the second person (i.e. you)
- ❑ Uses simplest tense possible
- ❑ Avoids using words with more than three syllables
- ❑ Instructions are listed using numerals or bullets
- ❑ “Chunked” content with white space in between
- ❑ Avoids legal jargon. Where a legal term is necessary, define the term simply in the content.
- ❑ Uses the bold and italic formats sparingly

# Revise for readability

## Original Paragraph

You may be evicted with not less than *fourteen* (14) days notice if you do not comply with the terms of your rental agreement; if you do not keep your rental unit clean and safe; if you do not allow your landlord access to the rental unit; if you remove a lock without receiving permission; or, if you replace or add a lock and either don't ask for permission in writing or don't give your landlord a key.

□ **How could this be revised to improve readability?**

# Revise for readability

## Sample revised paragraph

You can be evicted if:

- you don't follow your rental agreement
- you don't keep your rental unit clean and safe
- you don't let your landlord into the rental unit
- you remove a lock without your landlord's permission
- you add or replace a lock without your landlord's permission
- you add or replace a lock, and you don't give your landlord a key

Your landlord must give you at least 14 days notice before he evicts you.

Source: [MontanaLawHelp.org](http://MontanaLawHelp.org) Guide to Content Development

## Part 4.

# Getting started and sticking with it

(aka, Great ideas...

but how can I write content that  
lives up to all of this?!)

# Written protocols can help!

- Efficient way to educate people
- Helps you think through details
- Essential for decentralized content development
- Written protocols provide continuity in the event of staff turnover or reorganization
- Great examples of written protocols from states online at:  
<http://www.probono.net/link.cfm?2683> (site requires users to log-in)

# Enlist help

- Get a second opinion
- Literature and tools available to help assess the reading level:
  - Flesch-Kincaid readability test - In Word under Tools - > Spelling and Grammar -> Options
- Many more resources on usability and literacy: [probono.net/statewebsites](http://probono.net/statewebsites) → Developing Client Content and in [LSTech.org](http://LSTech.org)
- “Field test” your site and content with clients and incorporate their feedback



**Thank you!**  
**Questions?**